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ABSTRACT

This lesson, one of four stand-alone lessons that examine Australia as an aspect of world history, introduces students to the environment and geography of Australia and the positions that Australia takes on global warming. Students are asked, as mock members of an Australian delegation to an international conference to be held in 2015 in Canberra (Australia), to design a plan that addresses global warming. As a closing activity, students compare their plan with the one Australia submitted at the Kyoto Summit in 1997. Contains 14 sources and 10 supplemental readings. (BT)

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Lesson Four: Global Connections and Interactions. Australian Studies High School Series.

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Australian Education Office, Washington, DC.

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John D Wells

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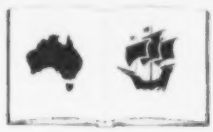
Australian Studies



High School Series

History Unit

Lesson Four: Global Connections and Interactions

Materials for Lesson

Handout #1: Australia's Environment and its Impact on Policy

Handout #2: Australia's Position on Climate Change Policy

Handout #3: Charts on Emissions and Temperature Change

Handout #4: Procedure Sheet for Delegation Planning Strategy

Other sources as listed for supplemental reading

Objectives

Students will...

- apply their knowledge of Australia and its role in the international community to the problem of global warming.
- design a plan to deal with global warming in the future that reflects Australian policy in the international community.
- compare and contrast Australia's circumstances to those of other nations in the world.
- summarize the conditions in Australia that has and will impact their position on solutions for global warming.

Teacher Introduction

The study of world history concludes with a look at contemporary issues that face nations today and what the international community is doing about these issues and problems. As a case study for a unit on world problems a focus on Australia and global warming is instructive.

Australia is an interesting study due to its distinct climate ***and*** population circumstances and its position on how best to deal with climate change worldwide. Despite Australia's position in the developed world it has a stance that more closely mirrors that of the nations in the developing world. At the Kyoto Summit in 1997, many nations met to discuss the problems and concerns facing the world community and the global warming that is occurring in the earth's atmosphere. The goal of the summit was to develop a plan for reducing green house gas emissions that all nations could agree upon. Australia took a position shared by non-EU nations that called for a more "flexible" approach to limiting green house gas emissions. Within Australia there was debate with one group arguing that Australian industry should be allowed to increase its emissions due to its high dependence on energy. The other argument espoused was that saving industry and jobs in any amount did not justify the destruction of the environment. Yet another position stated that environmentally friendly industry would, in fact, be more profitable and improve employment within Australia.

This lesson will introduce the students to information about the environment and geography of Australia and its implications for the positions that Australia takes on global warming. The students will also develop background knowledge on global warming. Using these understandings the students will be asked, as members of an Australian delegation, to an international environmental conference to be held in 2015 in Canberra, Australia, to design a plan for addressing the issue of global warming. As a closing activity the students can compare their plan with the one that Australia had for the Kyoto Summit in 1997, and the plan that other nations did or did not support and the reasons why. This activity can be structured entirely as an individual task or students may be grouped into delegations once the initial reading and research is completed. The reading and research can be completed as home work assignments. This lesson may also be embedded in a larger activity such as a global conference simulation with a variety of nations and positions represented, i.e., a Model UN or ASEAN simulation.

Historical Background

Australia is the world's smallest continent, but the largest island. It is about the size of the 48 contiguous United States, but its population is that of New York. Australia has the longest coastline of any country. Because it lies in the middle of a tectonic plate it has few earthquakes. The temperature rarely falls below freezing except in the mountains and in the south. However, fire, flood, hurricanes, and drought are all natural disasters with which Australians contend. Geographical areas of Australia include the bush, outback, beach, and forests. Most of Australia's population lives on the coast.

"Millions of years of isolation from the other continents have resulted in Australia's plants and animals evolving in ways different from elsewhere. As a result, a high percentage of Australian species occur nowhere else. At the species level, about 82 percent of our mammals, about 45 percent of our land birds, about 85 percent of our flowering plants, about 89 percent of our reptiles, and about 93 percent of our frogs are found only in Australia. Australia is also very rich in some groups of species: the Acacias, comprising perhaps 1070 species, subspecies and varieties, are one example. Some of Australia's species contain populations with markedly different genetic make ups.

Human activity has been changing Australian ecosystems for approximately 50,000 years, but the pace and extent of change has increased since European settlement, about 200 years ago. Australia's

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temperate zones and coastal ecosystems have been extensively altered, many wetlands have been degraded, and most other parts of the country have been modified to some extent by various factors, including introduced plants and animals. The result has been dramatic declines in the distribution and abundance of many species." (*National Strategy for Conservation*, Jan 1997) Due to the changes and pressures on the ecosystems of Australia unique approaches to protection and sustainability have become a part of Australian environmental policy.

"Maintaining biological diversity is much more than just protecting wildlife and their habitats in nature conservation reserves. It is also about the sustainable use of biological resources and safeguarding the life-support systems on earth. Ecologically sustainable management of all Australia's terrestrial and marine environments is essential for the conservation of biological diversity." (*National Strategy for Conservation*, Jan 1997) These ideas are important for understanding Australia's unique environment which has impacted their position on global warming.

Australia [was] pleased with the 1997 Kyoto Summit outcome as its principal elements met Australian objectives. The Kyoto plan is based on a set of equitable differentiated country emissions targets; an Australian target (-8% of 1990 levels) that is realistic and achievable given Australia's circumstances, coverage is comprehensive including gases, emissions sources, and sinks and takes into account Australia's land use change and forestry section which is a source of emissions due to its historic rates of land clearing. Finally, it contains flexible mechanisms such as international emissions tracking, emissions budgets and joint implementation. (*Outcomes of the Third*, Dec. 1997)

The one disappointment that Australia has had with this agreement is that there was no resolution on a process to encourage developing countries to commit to decisions in Kyoto. However, as Senator Robert Hill (Minister for the Environment) said after the conference, "this was a win-win result that required a comparable sacrifice from Australians to that being borne by other nations." (*Outcomes of the Third*, Dec. 1997)

In negotiating at the Kyoto Summit, Australia was part of a coalition called the "Umbrella Group" including nations in the Asia-Pacific region – New Zealand, USA, Canada, and Japan – as well as Russia, Ukraine, Norway, and Ireland. Australia recognizes that the real work of Kyoto will be designing implementation strategies for emissions trading realizing that Australia's trading competition will be based in developing nations and that they will be a relatively small player in this area. Also, the emissions growth limitation of 8% will be difficult given the high proportion of emissions from methane, nitrous oxide, and land clearing when compared with other nations.

In sum, the Australian sentiment is that "the Kyoto Protocol [was] a fair, sensible, and environmentally effective outcome." (*Outcomes of the Third*, Dec. 1997)

Credits

- "Greenhouse gas emissions" and "Greenhouse gas emissions per capita 1990", data from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industry Research Organisation.
- "Variations from average temperature over Australia", Australian Bureau of Meteorology, (Internet address: http://www.bom.gov.au), 6 November 1998

Sources

- Australian Education Office, *Australia Beyond the Outback*, 1998
- Australian Department of the Environment, www.dest.gov.au
- *Climate Change: Australia's Approach*, November 1997, www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/cc_aus_approach.html
- Downer, the Hon Alexander, *Australia and Climate Change*, July 7, 1997, www.dfat.gov.au/pmb/speeches/fa_sp/clim_ch.html
- Environment Australian Policies, www.environment.gov.au/environment/epeg/policies.html
- Fischer, the Hon Tim, *Climate Change: The Task Ahead*, www.dfat.gov.au/pmb/speeches/tr_sp/climate
- McDonald, Meg, *The International Emission Trading System: Australia's Perspective*, www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/abare-ect.html
- _____, *Kyoto: The Impact on Australia*, February 12, 1998, www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/impact
- *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity*, January 1997, www.environment.gov.au/portfolio/esd/biodiv/strategy/contents.html
- O'Sullivan, Paul, *Australia and Climate Change*, July 15, 1997, www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/o_sull.html
- *Outcomes of the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties*, December 1997, www.dfat.gov.au/environment/climate/cop3.html

Follow-up Activities

Students must write a letter to the Prime Minister of Australia explaining their delegation's plan for the environmental conference and why it is the best plan for both Australia and the world. This letter needs to be persuasive and detailed, and should advise the Prime Minister of any consequences or adverse effects that may require action.

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Teacher Notes

Anticipatory Set

Review reasons why a nation chooses to get involved with a global issue or conflict: National Security, National Interest, and Humanitarian Interests. Introduce the idea that global warming is an issue that impacts all nations, but perhaps none more so than Australia. One of the areas of ozone depletion is over Australia and with a large land mass and low population density their national interest has led them to become quite involved in the international arena.

Activities

1. Ask the students to obtain background knowledge on global warming through reading and notetaking of suggested supplemental readings or independent research.

2. Ask the students to read and highlight Handout #1: Australia's Environment and its Impact on Policy, Handout #2: Australia's Position on Climate Change Policy, and Handout #3: Charts on Emissions and Temperature Change. Ask them to study the environmental data on Australian emissions and temperature as compared with selected nations.

3. Group the students into Australian delegations and then tell your class:
"You are a member of an Australian delegation that will represent your nation at an international environmental conference to be held in Canberra, Australia in the year 2015. Using your knowledge of Australian geography and environmental policy as well as your understanding of global warming and climatic change you will design a plan that will represent Australia's ideas and position on this significant problem." Ask the students to follow the instructions on Handout #4: Procedure Sheet for Delegation Planning Strategy. (Please read Handout #4 before passing it out to the students.)

Note:
To make this lesson more focused on domestic politics rather than international the students could research the various Australian political parties and present plans that reflect the viewpoints of the political parties rather than other nations in the international system. A listing of the political parties and their websites follows:

Australian Labor Party
http://www.alp.org.au/
Liberal Party
http://ccadfa.cc.adfa.oz.au/~adm/lib/libweb/
National Party
http://www.npa.org.au/

Australian Democrats
http://www.democrats.org.au/
Greens
http://www.peg.apc.org/~ausgreen/
One Nation
http://www.gwb.com.au/onenation/

Check for Understanding

Ask the students to present their plans to the class. Assess the presentations by delineating levels of logic, realism, and factual approaches. You may then present the Kyoto outcomes as a comparison AND/OR hold a class discussion on other nations' reactions to the plans and how other nations' ideas and positions are similar to or different from Australia's.

Supplemental Readings

Bowman, Lee, *Study Suggests Brightening Sun Adds to Global Warming*, Scripps Howard News Service, September 25,1997

Drastic Cuts Urged to Stabilize CO2 Concentrations, Japan Times, Http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cop3/news/12-05h.html

Global Warming Our Changing World, BBC News,
Http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special_...ech/global_warming/newsid_330003357.stm

Impact of Global Warming may be Severe and Wide-Ranging, BBC News,
Http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special_...ech/global_warming/newsaid_32000/32961.stm

Johnston, Eric, *U.S. Scientist Discounts Human Link to Global Warming*, Japan Times,
www.japantimes.co.jp/cop3/news/12-05f.html

Williams, Brian, *Poor Nations get Angry at Global Warming Meeting*, Yahoo News,
www.yahoo.com/headlines/971205/teen/stories/environment_1.html

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Handout #1: *Australia's Environment and Its Impact on Policy*

Excerpts from Address given by Paul O'Sullivan, Deputy Chief of Mission, Australian Embassy, Washington, D.C. at the Competitive Enterprise Institute's seminar on the theme "The Costs of Kyoto: The Implications of Climate Change Policy," *Australia and Climate Change*, July 15, 1997.

Why is Australia different?

So what explains the strength of our resolve and commitment? Australia's position stems from the fact that our national circumstances – our economic, social and environmental attributes – limit the extent to which our priorities, concerns and interests parallel those of other developed countries. Australia's physical characteristics, the fact that we have a land mass that is one-and-a half times bigger than Europe but a vastly smaller population density, illustrate the stark differences between us and our OECD[1] partners in western Europe. Australia has quite different sorts of environmental pressures; the speed with which our population is growing, relative to others, also differs; and we have abundant natural resources, including fossil fuel and minerals.

Not surprisingly because of an abundance of fossil fuel and mineral resources Australia is the world's largest coal exporter, the third largest aluminum exporter, and one of the largest (the fifth largest, in fact) energy exporters amongst OECD countries. Our exports are energy-intensive. In fact, our exports are, on average, twice as carbon-intensive as the goods we import.

Australia's trade outlook is also more and more defined by our growing economic ties with developing countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. Almost half (around 43%) of our trade is with non-OECD countries and over 60 percent of our exports go to Asia.

The picture that clearly emerges for Australia, and many other countries, is of an economy that is responding to, and benefiting from, the forces of globalisation by becoming increasingly specialized, particularly in energy-intensive production. Such efficient specialization should be encouraged.

I would argue, however, that if stringent emission controls are introduced in Kyoto then many of these industries will re-locate to non-OECD countries with no emission abatement commitments and less efficient, less environmentally sound technology.

Such a possibility is also very pertinent for the United States. Unlike the countries of western Europe which principally trade with each other, the economies of Australia and the U.S. have become increasingly interlinked with the dynamic economies of Asia and Latin America alone, if current trends continue, will exceed both Japan and western Europe combined as an export market for U.S. goods by the year 2010.

How does being different influence our negotiating position?

All this means that we simply cannot accept what the Europeans want – a uniform 15 percent reduction below 1990 greenhouse gas emission levels. To do so would be potentially very harmful for Australia's domestic economy and our international trade. The cumulative loss to the Australian economy by the year 2020 has been estimated at $150 billion, job losses would be in the tens of thousands. Looked at in another way, we would end-up losing more than we gained in the outcome from the hard-fought Uruguay round. Nearly eight years of trade negotiation would be wiped out in a single stroke.

The target set by the European Union is unrealistic and unachievable, even for the EU. Just consider for a moment how many EU member countries are actually going to meet the ambitious commitments they made at the original earth summit in Rio five years ago. And remember we are talking about a reduction in emission levels to 1990 levels by the year 2000. Probably only two, the UK and Germany, [can reach these levels]. But in both cases, this is due to national circumstances unrelated to [the] greenhouse [effect]. The UK [will reach these levels] because of its switch to natural gas following the closure of inefficient coal mines and Germany because of the collapse of East German industry. Following reunification East German emissions fell by almost 50 percent.

The original Rio commitments are not going to be met because they were never realistically based in the first place. Australia like a majority of developed countries cannot meet them. So the challenge for us, and other OECD countries, is to learn from our experience and come up with a credible plan of action to avert the global problem of climate change.

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Handout #1: *cont.*

Excepts from Address by The Hon Alexander Downer, MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the "Global Emissions Agreements and Australian Business" Seminar, *Australia and Climate Change*, Melbourne, July 7, 1997.

Economic costs

We, the government, are going to continue striving for an outcome that does not harm Australia's economic interests. To approach the negotiations any differently would simply invite trouble. It would impose on Australia a degree of economic sacrifice that is out of all proportion to Australia's share of global emissions.

Therefore, we will go on highlighting the economic consequences that an unfair outcome at Kyoto would cause Australia. It would put investment at risk; it would put Australian jobs at risk, particularly in regional Australia; and it would put Australia's economic growth and future prosperity at risk.

The outlook were we to go along with the kind of approach that the European Union wants, but we oppose, is really quite worrying. Let me give you an idea of the magnitude of the costs that we will have to bear. ABARE[2], for example, estimates the cumulative loss to the Australian economy by the year 2020 would be $150 billion. Resultant job losses would run into the tens of thousands.

While some may argue about the seriousness of this we believe it is significant and disproportionate relative to others. Looked at another way, we would end up losing more than we gained in the hard-fought Uruguay Round outcome. That is a price in lost income and lost jobs that Australia simply cannot afford to pay, nor should we have to.

Ours is an especially energy intensive economy. We have a relatively rapid rate of population growth. Our trade linkages with developing economies particularly in East Asia are strong. Therefore, the only target that Australia could agree to at Kyoto would be one that allowed reasonable growth in our greenhouse emissions.

The reality is that because we are a relatively small and highly specialized economy we cannot afford the cost involved in taking on a disproportionately high share of the global greenhouse abatement effort. It would have a negative impact on every sector of the Australian economy. This includes energy, transport, agriculture and the residential sector.

The competitiveness of Australia's energy-intensive non-ferrous metals and steel industries would decline as a result of higher power costs. Moreover, given our reliance on fossil fuels and fossil fuel intensive exports Australia's export revenues, and hence national income, would significantly decline.

Such a cost to Australia would be disproportionate to any environmental benefit gained. At best, the flat rate outcome favored not only the EU but the U.S. as well would only have a marginal impact on the growth of global emissions. For all these reasons, we strongly advocate differentiation, not just for ourselves but for everybody.

[1]OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a group of wealthy industrial countries.
[2]ABARE – Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics.

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Handout #2: *Australia's Position on Climate Change Policy*

Excerpts from Address given by Paul O'Sullivan, Deputy Chief of Mission, Australian Embassy, Washington, D.C. at the Competitive Enterprise Institute's seminar on the theme "The Costs of Kyoto: The Implications of Climate Change Policy," *Australia and Climate Change*, July 15, 1997.

Australia like everybody else in the negotiations wants a good outcome for the global environment. But we are not prepared to accept an imposed result at any price. And nor should the U.S. or any other nation accept an outcome at any price. The only emission reduction target on the negotiating table, the one that is being pushed by the European Union, would impose a cost to Australia and others that would be disproportionate to any environmental benefit gained.

We do not see why an Australian, or American, should have to shoulder more of the economic burden for emission abatement than say a European. The economic cost to each should be the same. We believe that no one country should take on a disproportionate share of the burden.

Prime Minister Howard has taken up Australia's argument with other world leaders including: German Chancellor Kohl, Japan's Prime Minister Hashimoto, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and most recently President Clinton. Australia's message has been put clearly. We are committed to a successful outcome at Kyoto, one that is not only environmentally effective but which also safeguards all our economic futures and takes into account the national circumstances of all participants. We were therefore pleased that the recent Denver Summit and UN General Assembly special session did not result in some precipitate last minute deal on uniform targets.

It strikes us that the communiqué language of both those meetings signal that a long over due sense of realism is beginning to creep into deliberations on climate change, and that the take or leave it approach that the Europeans want to impose on the rest of us, irrespective of our individual national circumstances, is simply not going to wash with others, including the United States.

Let me say though before going on that Australian business is strongly behind the Government on this issue. And the government itself is unified in its approach with all those ministries with a direct interest in climate change pulling together in the national interest. This gives us a very strong sense of purpose and resolve in our approach to the climate change negotiations.

Developing countries

Of great importance, we see differentiation as an enticement for developing countries to eventually come on board. The rapid growth in developing country emissions means that without developing country participation, developed country efforts to address climate change will be overwhelmed.

Australia's efforts in the current negotiations have concentrated on working to ensure that the Kyoto outcome builds a solid foundation for future agreements. An agreement which not only protects our interest but can also accommodate all countries within the same framework. Differentiated targets would achieve this; uniform targets would not.

Emissions trading

Before concluding, let me just mention where we stand on emissions trading especially in light of the U.S. view that to establish an appropriate regime it needs to be underpinned by reduction targets that are legally binding. Australia has adopted a cautious approach to this issue. We support the US concept in principle as we recognize that emissions trading can provide greater flexibility in reducing emissions.

However, we are keen to know the basis for the initial allocation of emission entitlements. Emissions trading could result in huge transfers or wealth. For example, uniform entitlements based on 1990 emission levels would result in the countries of eastern Europe being the chief beneficiaries. As this in effect would be rewarding them for their past inefficiency many developing countries would regard such an outcome as unfair, particularly as the wealth transfers are likely to dwarf aid flows.

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Handout #2: *cont.*

Excerpts from Address by the Hon Alexander Downer, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the "Global Emissions Agreements and Australian Business" Seminar, *Australia and Climate Change*, Melbourne, July 7, 1997.

Flat rate targets

At this stage, the U.S. has not come up with a specific target. The Europeans have. They are proposing in these negotiations a 15% reduction in 1990 emission levels by 2010 for the EU collectively and other OECD countries. Such an ambitious target is unrealistic and unachievable, even for the EU. It is hard to believe that the EU's proposal is really anything more than a negotiating tactic to make them look 'green'. It has little to do with what the EU thinks it can achieve. Nor does it in any way reflect upon any EU's performance in delivering on the commitments it made at the original Earth Summit in Rio five years ago.

Only two EU countries are expected to meet the implied Rio commitment of reducing their emissions to 1990 levels by 2000. In both cases these are due to national circumstances unrelated to greenhouse. The UK because of its switch to natural gas following the closure of inefficient coal mines. And Germany because of the collapse of East German industry. Following reunification East German emissions fell by almost 50%.

The EU knows full well that a 15% reduction by 2010 is simply not a realistic target. Nor was it ever meant to be. It is a negotiating figure that the Europeans will not have to meet given that the Americans would not agree to a global, flat-rate target of that magnitude.

Australia cannot accept a flat-rate target approach. Mr. Howard made this very clear in his most recent meetings with President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair. Not only does it have the potential to do us harm economically, but it could also unnecessarily damage the global economy as a whole. The costs both nationally and globally would be higher because a flat-rate target does not take into account differing national economic circumstances., It also ignores economic interdependence..

Australia's case helps to illustrate this point. We have strived to promote a level playing field in the global economy. We firmly believe that the global economy will function most efficiently, and to everybody's benefit, if we all make the most of our respective comparative advantages. We should also be complementing each other's comparative advantages, as Australia is doing. The result in our case is that the Australian economy has become a highly specialized resource processor, part of a regional production chain, linked to Asia Pacific growth.

Differentiation

This is an appropriate point to expand the equity theme that I briefly introduced earlier. Our position, and the case we are arguing in the climate change negotiations, is based on a concept that we as Australians can readily identify with, and accept. And that is the idea that while we should all be pulling our weight in tackling global warming, nobody should be worse off for doing so. In other words, an Australian should not have to shoulder more of the economic burden for greenhouse gas abatement than say a European, American or Japanese. We are talking about an 'equity of effort.'

The best means for doing this is through differentiation. It is by far the fairest approach we can take to address a global problem: not just our problem but everybody's problem. Therefore, if everybody does their fair share based on an equitable arrangement like the one the Europeans have come up with for themselves we can achieve a meaningful environmental outcome at Kyoto.

That is why Australia is arguing for differentiated targets that take into account each country's particular circumstances, economic costs and available opportunities to limit emissions as long as no body is relatively worse off as a result. We are not looking for a special deal just because we want to negotiate our own target. We are not seeking anything new.

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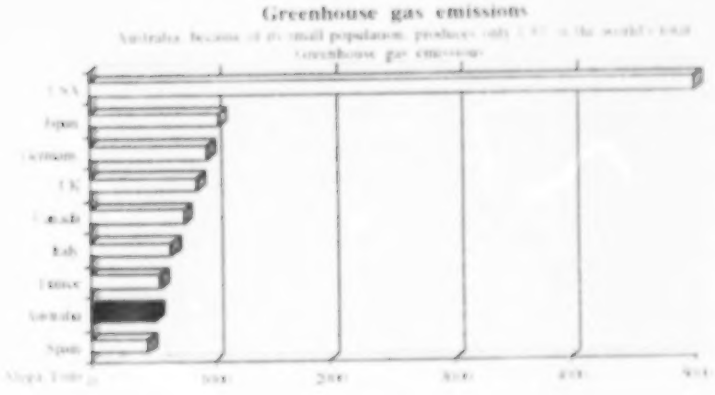
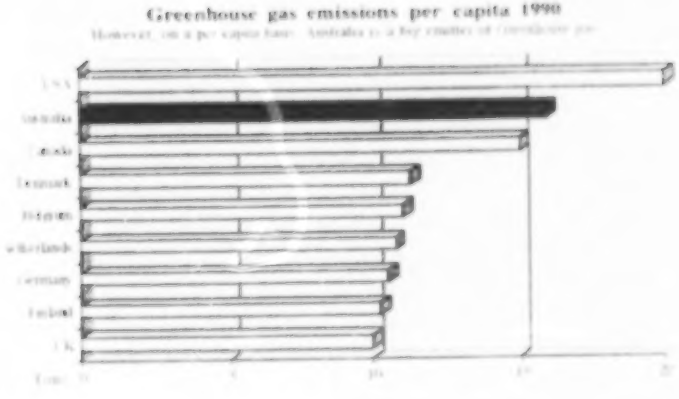
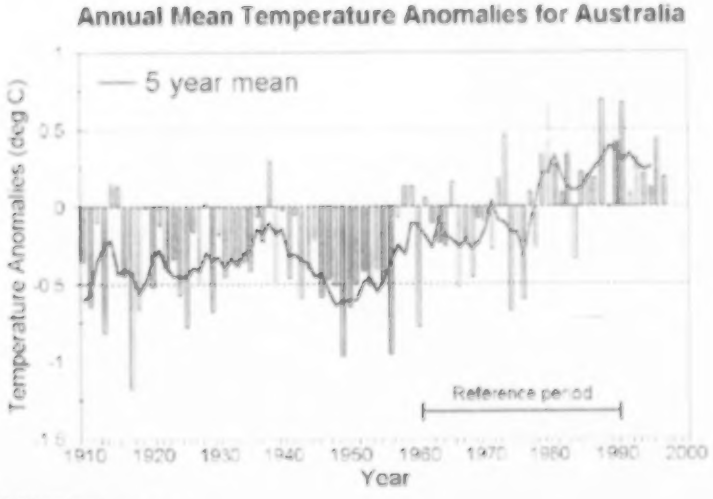
Handout #3: *Charts on Emissions and Temperature Change*







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Handout #4: *Procedure Sheet for Delegation Planning Strategy*

Your plan for the conference must include the following:

A. An Introduction: The introduction should include a clear, concise overview that explains the current situation with global warming. It should include the factors in Australia that influence its position on this plan i.e., the size of its population and its density. It should also include a thesis statement that indicates the overall goal or direction of the plan.

B. An Evaluation: The evaluation should discuss the programs or plans that are already in operation. What policies are working and why? What policies are not as effective as they could be and why?

C. Proposals:
1. What programs should be put into place to address global warming?
2. What improvements could be made to existing policies to make them more effective?
3. What policies should be eliminated because they are not cost effective and/or not having a significant impact?

D. A Conclusion: The conclusion should summarize the main ideas of your plan and explain why your plan is the best way to address this problem. Be persuasive as you would like other nations' delegates to adopt this plan for world action.

E. When drafting your plan please consider:
1. What is currently being done in Australia and in other nations such as the USA or the developing world.
2. Australia's expertise in environmental program management. This is itself a marketable commodity.
3. Targeting all the players within a nation that play a role in any environmental policy – the government, business (private sector), individual citizens.
4. The lessons Australia has learned negotiating at other conferences – cooperation with nations rather than confrontation is most effective, unbalanced approaches such as a "greener than green" approach are not realistic, and assessing the needs of developing nations must be done.

F. Use the handouts and data provided with this lesson to generate ideas that incorporate:
a. Emissions standards
b. Emissions trading
c. Education
d. Implementation ideas

G. Prepare to present your plan to the rest of the class for a vote.

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Dear Educator:

Thank you for your interest in Australia and this History Unit. This package is designed to provide you with ready-made, stand alone lessons that examine Australia as an aspect of world history. The first question many of you may ask is why Australia? Is the study of Australia relevant to our study of the world and our common heritage? After all, it is isolated, sparsely populated and has a brief recorded history. But it is these very characteristics that makes the study of Australia valuable. Australia's unique geographic characteristics and history serve as a useful case study of key global concepts. The study of the Neolithic period, the Age of Discovery, nationalism, and 20th century global problems have all been chosen as episodes in which Australia's case is an instructive model.

For example, an analysis of Australia in the Age of Discovery brings in all the major players of the period within its own microcosm. Interestingly, Australia is the only continent whose discovery was fully documented. Its gradual discovery took place during a period when people began keeping accurate records leaving us a wealth of primary resources for our analysis. Indeed, much of what we learn about Australia comes from first hand observations.

In many ways Australia stands as a bridge between the past and present; a modern society built within the last 200 years directly on top of the last great link to our hunter-gatherer past. Many faces will emerge as your students examine Australia's history and identity: the Aboriginal past, the European settlement, the creation of a new nationality, and its changing ties to the Pacific rim, the United States and Europe. Australia is still evolving, and a study of its people and history reveals the conflict Australia feels between developed and developing status and Western and Asian ties.

A final point of value in the study of Australia is the historical parallel between Australia and the United States. Both are large countries, colonized by Europeans, who cleared vast wildernesses to build modern, wealthy nations in recent times. It may interest American students to know that Australian history displays many of the same triumphs-and-bitter tragedies as their own. This may help them to see American history as well as Australian history within the same global context. In the end, Australia shows us as Americans that we all share the same global heritage, and not just western heritage.

The Australian Education Office would like to thank Mr. John Waldron for writing lessons one and two, and Ms. Tamara Lipke for writing lessons three and four. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Ms. Jan Lutterbein who reviewed the lessons, Ms. Jill Indyk (Director, Cultural Affairs, Embassy of Australia, Washington, DC), the staff at the Australian Embassy Library in Washington, DC, and the publishers, museums and libraries who granted permission to use their material.

We hope that you find these lessons useful. Please provide us with feedback by completing and returning the questionnaire on the back of this introduction.

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Questionnaire

This is the first Series of its kind and so your input is needed and appreciated.
Please respond at your earlier convenience. Thank you.

Did you teach about Australia before receiving this curriculum? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what subjects(s) did you teach?
(For example, history, literature, geography, etc.)

If no, why not?
(For example, no resources, not enough time, no interest, no curriculum, etc.)

Which Lessons did you use?

☐ One ☐ Three ☐ None
☐ Two ☐ Four ☐ Created my own using these lessons as the basis.

Did you find the Teacher Introduction comprehensive? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you find the Historical Background comprehensive and relevant? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you find the Teacher Notes user friendly? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you find the Student Handouts user friendly? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What other subjects on Australia would you like to see developed?
(For example, literature, environment, geography, more history, etc.)

Which materials on Australia would you purchase?

☐ Lesson Plans ☐ CD Roms ☐ Maps / Classroom Decor
☐ Videos ☐ Slides ☐

Comments & Suggestions:

Please send this form to:
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